

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Frederick Area School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006-2007**

Team Members: Chris Sargent, Linda Shirley, Education Specialists, Cindy Kirshman, Transition Liaison

Dates of On Site Visit: January 24, 2007

Date of Report: January 30, 2007

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

- Promising Practice** The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
- Meets Requirements** The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
- Needs Assistance** The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.
- Needs Intervention** The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.
- Not applicable** In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- A – General District Information

- C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- H – Exiting Information
- Surveys
- Private school information
- Comprehensive plan
- Comprehensive system of personnel development plan
- Screening data

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Frederick School District has an established ongoing child find system to locate, identify and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years of age, who may need special education. The district has an effective pre-referral and referral system in place to ensure students are identified without unnecessary delay.

If a child with disabilities is referred or placed in a private school or facility, the district’s comprehensive plan addresses the school’s responsibility to ensure special education and related services are provided in accordance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Data-based decision-making procedures are used to review and analyze district data to determine that the district is making progress toward the state’s performance goals and indicators. The district reviews and analyzes data and revises policies and procedures if significant discrepancies are found between the long-term suspension and expulsion rates for children with and without disabilities.

The Frederick School District ensures that an adequate supply of personnel are employed, properly supervised, fully licensed and certified to work with children with disabilities. The district implements procedures to determine personnel development needs and takes appropriate action to meet those identified needs.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- I – Age Placement Alternative Data

- K – Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- Comprehensive Plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Frederick School District provided FAPE to all eligible children with disabilities. While the district has not had any students with disabilities suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days, policies and procedures are in place to assure that such students would be provided FAPE.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- A – General District Information
- Student File Reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive Plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Frederick Area School District provides appropriate written notice and obtains informed consent before assessments are administered to a child as part of evaluation or re-evaluation. The district ensures proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process. Reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements to ensure students are appropriately evaluated for continuing eligibility.

Out of compliance

The steering committee concluded parent input into the evaluation process is acquired but not documented.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee. Through a review of student records, parent input into the evaluation process was documented and therefore meets requirements.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- L – Complaints
- M – Hearings
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental rights document
- Consent and prior notice forms
- Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) disclosure

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded parents are informed of their parental rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in their native language or another mode of communication, if necessary, of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought. The rights of a child are protected if no parent can be identified.

The district provides parents of children in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

The Frederick Area School District has policies and procedures in place for responding to complaint and due process actions that ensure compliance.

Out of compliance

The steering committee concluded IEPs do not state specifically how the student will satisfy district graduation requirements.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Out of compliance

Refer to graduation requirements under principle 5, individual education program.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- Comprehensive plan
- Student file reviews

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that written notice is provided for all IEP meetings and includes all required content. The IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership and meets all identified responsibilities. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded agency representatives who are likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services were not consistently invited to IEP meetings. The justification for placement statements did not contain sufficient information as to why services are not provided in the regular classroom setting. The starting date on the IEPs were written incorrectly.

Out of compliance

The steering committee concluded present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are not consistently skill based strengths and weaknesses that are linked functional evaluation. IEPs do not state specifically how the student will satisfy district graduation requirements. Transition evaluations are administered however; the documentation was not used to develop the student's transition plan. In addition, the person/agency responsible for carrying out the transition service was not consistently documented.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under individual education program as concluded by the steering committee. Through a review of student records, agency representatives were invited to IEP meetings for students of transition age and the IEP starting date was appropriately documented. The present levels of academic performance and functional achievement included the students strengths/weaknesses in the skill areas affected by the disability and linked to evaluation with the exception of transition information. The monitoring team agreed these areas now meet requirements.

Out of Compliance: Needs assistance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program. Each student's individualized education program shall include:

(4) An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with non-disabled students in the regular class and in activities described in this section;

Through a review of student records the justification for placement did not consistently identify the acceptance or rejection of the team's placement decision. The information included in the justification for placement did not provide an explanation as to why the student could not receive their instruction with non-disabled students in the regular classroom. For example, "In order for...to progress in the general education curriculum the team feels that...placement is appropriate.

ARSD 24:05:27:13.02. Transition services. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Through a review of student record, the activities and services developed for students of transition age did not represent a coordinated set of activities that linked to the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. Transition was not addressed in the IEP by age 16 for one student and the PLAAF's did not contain transition strengths and needs for two students.

ARSD 24:05:27:12. Graduation requirements. Completion of an approved secondary special education program with a regular high school diploma signifies that the student no longer requires special education services. Graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma constitutes a change in placement requiring written prior notice in accordance with this article. The instructional program shall be specified on the individual educational program. The individual educational program shall state specifically how the student in need of special education or special education and related services will satisfy the district's graduation requirements. Parents must be informed through the individual educational program process at least one year in advance of the intent to graduate their child upon completion of the individual educational program and to terminate services by graduation.

Through interview and a review of student records, the IEPs for three students did not specifically state what the students needed to meet the district's graduation requirements.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.02. Development, review, and revision of individualized education program.

In developing, reviewing, and revising each student's individualized education program, the team shall consider the strengths of the student and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their student, the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the student, and as appropriate, the results of the student's performance on any general state or district-wide assessment programs.

Through a review of 7 student records, parent input into the individual education program was not documented in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student File Reviews
- Comprehensive Plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Frederick Area School District ensures all eligible students receive services in the least restrictive environment with the supports they need for their successful participation.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.